

Dr M: BN to drop those with -poor records

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By Harpajan Singh

JERTIH, Mon. — Barisan Nasional MPs and state assemblymen with poor service records will be dropped in the next general election, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

MPs and assemblymen who had served a few terms might also be dropped, the Prime Minister told The Star after addressing a gathering of about 10,000 people here.

"It is not that we want to drop our existing *wakil rakyat* but if they are no good and have not served their constituents, they have to be replaced.

"As for those who have served a few terms, we will replace them to give the younger leaders a chance as well," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is the Barisan chairman, said the Front would assess the service records of its *wakil* before deciding on any changes, adding that he had not made any assessment so far.

He said the Barisan Government's priority was always to serve the multiracial community fairly without discrimination.

Dr Mahathir said he was pleased with the extraordinary support

shown by the people during his pre-election tours to Lembah Pantai in the Federal Territory yesterday and Besut today.

Earlier in his speech, Dr Mahathir denied allegations by the opposition that the Government suppressed freedom of the press.

"If the Government did not practise freedom of the press, then anti-government newspapers like *Watan* and *Mingguan Kota* would not be selling anymore," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was the opposition which was going round threatening to kill journalists working for newspapers which

supported, the Government's efforts to build the nation.

He said an opposition party leader made a speech recently, accusing him of plotting the death of army generals in a recent helicopter crash.

"They alleged that I planned it in order to make my relative, Tan Sri Jen Hashim Ali, the armed forces chief... there is a tape of the speech and I was very shocked to hear it myself," he said.

"They simply want to discredit me to gain political mileage."

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Datin

Seri Dr Siti Hasmah, Minister in the PM's Department, Datuk Dr Yusof

Noor, and Terengganu Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, later presented 62 tractors to farmers.

Earlier, the Prime Minister visited the Kenyir reservoir and a flood-mitigation embankment project in Sungai Benut.

He later addressed about 1,000 Umno election machinery members before attending a closed-door briefing on agriculture and a closed-door meeting with 4 Jertih Umno.